



Chair Nick Frentz
Minnesota Senate Energy, Utilities, Environment, and Climate Finance and Policy Committee

January 20, 2023

Dear Chair Frentz and Committee Members,

On behalf of our member organizations and Minnesotans throughout the state, the Minnesota Environmental Partnership would like to express our support for SF 4, the 100% Clean Energy bill. As the fastest-warming state in the nation, Minnesota is facing the consequences of climate change. This crisis is the greatest threat to our people and environment – but leading the way to solve it is our greatest opportunity.

Minnesotans are already benefitting from the rapid growth in clean electricity as wind turbines and solar panels are brought online across our state, coexisting with our farms and communities without generating air pollution. The increasing affordability, efficiency, and reliability of these clean power sources make scaling them up easier than ever. By accelerating this transition through SF 4, Minnesota will enjoy the benefits of clean energy sooner and do our part to fight climate change.

It is now easy to imagine a future in which Minnesota's electric grid runs free of costly, unhealthy fossil fuels. We will no longer need to import our sources of energy – coal and natural gas – from other states, helping us to lower costs and avoid price shocks endemic to the fossil fuel industry.

MEP strongly supports a pathway to an equitable, carbon-free future. While SF 4 makes significant strides to help us move toward 100% clean electricity, there is room for improvement. Our state must think carefully about whether a proposed solution will protect the health and safety of our communities while at the same time ensuring quantifiable, long-term greenhouse gas emissions reductions. We are concerned about the inclusion of large hydro in SF 4. Large hydropower – such as that produced by Manitoba Hydro and sold by Minnesota Power to its customers – has displaced, and has had devastating impacts on, Indigenous communities. Impacted communities should be meaningfully consulted – and their input carefully considered – when making decisions about what energy sources are defined as renewable or ‘eligible energy technology.’ Trash incineration also negatively impacts the health of surrounding communities, and its emissions contribute to the climate crisis. We are glad to see the language limiting what can be included as an “eligible energy technology.”

Overall, this bill represents a historic step forward for Minnesota's economy, our public health, and our commitment to fighting climate change. We, along with Minnesotans around our great state, urge you to put us on the path toward a healthy, equitable and sustainable future. Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Morse".

Steve Morse
Executive Director